WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A cooking apparatus comprising:

a generally circular, rotatable food support member for supporting a food item thereon;

a drive mechanism connected to the food support member for rotating the food support member;

upper and lower housings disposed above and beneath the food support member, the upper and lower housings including an upper and lower heating member respectively, each of the upper and lower housings defining a pie–shaped portion having a front end and two diverging sides so as to cover a pie–shaped sector of the food support member;

wherein the drive mechanism rotates the food support member with the upper and lower heating members applying heat to a pie–shaped sector of the food support member to cook the food item.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the pie–shaped sector of the food support member covered by the upper and lower housings is equal to or less than about one quarter of the food support member total area.

3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the upper and lower heating members each provide a heat output which varies from a first end adjacent to an outer edge of the food support member to a second end adjacent to an inner center portion of the food support member, wherein the heat output is greater at the first end than at the second end;

4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the rotatable food support member comprises a solid base portion for supporting the food item.

5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein an upper surface of the solid base portion of the food support member includes a series of interruptions in the surface such that air pockets are created therein to assist in the browning of the food item during operation of the apparatus.

6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the interruptions in the surface of the solid base portion of the food support member are formed to create a waffle pattern.

7. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the food support member includes a downwardly extending annular rim to form a heat retention chamber under the solid base portion of the food support member.

8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the upper and lower heating members are comprised of metal sheathed heating elements which are arranged in a substantially pie–shaped orientation such that a greater portion of the heating elements are disposed adjacent an outer edge of the upper and lower heating members than at the front end of the upper and lower heating members adjacent a center portion of the food support member.

9. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the upper and lower heating members are each enclosed by an outer wall such that the heat from the upper and lower heating members is directed toward the food support member.

10. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the lower heating member is enclosed by an outer wall and the food support member includes a downwardly extending annular rim which is disposed adjacent an outer edge portion of the outer wall of the lower heating member such that the heating element of the lower housing is substantially enclosed between the food support member and the outer wall of the lower heating member.

11. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the upper and lower heating members each comprise a base portion and a resistance wire heating element with the heating element disposed around the base portion, the base portion formed in a shape such that the base portion has a greater surface area disposed adjacent an outer edge portion of the food support member than disposed adjacent an inner center portion of the food support member.

12. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the upper and lower heating members each include a quartz tube heating element and a deflector disposed between the heating element and the food support member, the deflector formed such that a substantially pie–shaped pattern of heat is transmitted from the heating elements to the food support member.

13. A cooking apparatus comprising:

a rotatable food support member for supporting a food item thereon;

a drive mechanism connected to the food support member for rotating the food support member;

a lower heating member disposed beneath the food support member, the lower heating member including a heating element and a base portion with the heating element disposed along the base portion, the heating element and base portion formed in a shape such that the heating element and base portion have a greater surface area disposed adjacent an outer edge portion of the food support member than disposed adjacent an inner center portion of the food support member;

an upper heating member disposed above the food support member, the upper heating member including a heating element and a base portion with the heating element disposed along the base portion, the heating element and base portion formed in a shape such that the heating element and base portion have a greater surface area disposed adjacent an outer edge portion of the food support member than disposed adjacent an inner center portion of the food support member;

wherein the upper and lower heating members are positioned above and below the food support member at substantially similar radial positions such that as the food support member rotates, the upper and lower heating members apply heat to the food item carried by the food support member to cook the food item.

14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the upper and lower heating members are shaped such that the total surface area of the heating element and base portion of each of the heating members adjacent the food support member is equal to or less than about one quarter of the total surface area of the food support member.

15. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the rotatable food support member comprises a solid base portion for supporting the food item.

16. A cooking apparatus comprising:

a generally circular, rotatable food support member for supporting a food item thereon;

a drive mechanism connected to the food support member for rotating the food support member;

upper and lower housings disposed above and beneath the food support member, the upper and lower housings including an upper and lower heating member respectively, each of the upper and lower heating members providing a heat output which varies from a first end adjacent to an outer edge of the food support member to a second end adjacent to an inner center portion of the food support member, wherein the heat output is greater at the first end than at the second end;

wherein the drive mechanism rotates the food support member with the upper and lower heating members applying heat to the food support member to cook the food item.

17. The apparatus of claim 16 further comprising a control circuitry electronically connected to the upper and lower heating members for controlling the operation of the upper and lower heating members.

18. The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the control circuitry allows for independent control of the operation of the upper and lower heating members separate from each other.

19. The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the control circuitry permits a user to vary the wattage of the upper or lower heating member.

20. A pizza cooking apparatus comprising:

a generally circular, rotatable pizza support member for supporting a round pizza thereon, the pizza support member including a solid base portion for supporting the pizza and a downwardly extending annular rim;

a drive mechanism connected to the pizza support member for rotating the pizza support member;

upper and lower housings disposed above and beneath the pizza support member, the upper and lower housings including a base portion and an upper and lower heating member respectively, each of the upper and lower housings defining a pie–shaped portion having a front end and two diverging sides so as to cover a pie–shaped sector of the pizza support member, the upper and lower heating members disposed along the base portion, the upper and lower heating members and base portion formed in a shape such that the upper and lower heating members and base portion have a greater surface area disposed adjacent an outer edge portion of the pizza support member than disposed adjacent an inner center portion of the pizza support member;

wherein each of the upper and lower heating members provide a heat output which varies from a first end adjacent to an outer edge of the pizza support member to a second end adjacent to an inner center portion of the pizza support member, wherein the heat output is greater at the first end than at the second end;

wherein the drive mechanism rotates the pizza support member with the upper and lower heating members applying heat to a pie–shaped sector of the pizza support member to cook the pizza.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the upper and lower heating members each include a pie–shaped base, and an outer rim surrounding a periphery of the base extending toward the pizza support member, the upper and lower heating members each including at least one sheathed heating element surrounded by the annular rim and facing the pizza support surface, the heating elements configured and arranged such that a greater portion of the heating element is disposed adjacent the outer edge portion of the pizza support member than disposed adjacent the inner center portion of the pizza support member

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